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## ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the discussion and recommendations of a symposium which focused on issues addressing the collection, sharing, and use of information to improve transition services and supports to youth and young adults with disabilities. Participants included representatives from state agencies, advocates, family members, and Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC) members. Section 1 discusses an information-based approach to supporting youth in transition. Section 2 provides four types of information needed to improve transition services and supports. Section 3 makes recommendations for collecting and sharing information. Recommendations include: conduct regular assessments of local needs; develop methods for sharing information across agencies; compile and review data on students' Individualized Education Program transition objectives; implement postschool follow-up studies at the local level; establish efficient strategies to manage information; develop resource directories at the local level; collect consumer information to improve services; and encourage networking among CTICs and other interagency committees. A list of 8 references and 20 resources are given in Sections 4 and 5. Section 6 includes the following appendices: responses to questions concerning information collected by Minnesota state agencies, the symposium agenda, a list of CTIC chairs in Minnesota, and excerpts from transition legislation. (CR)

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# Using Information

*To Improve Services to Minnesota  
Youth with Disabilities in Transition  
from School to Adult Life*

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Youth with Disabilities in Transition  
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*January 1994*

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**Institute on Community Integration (UAP)**  
College of Education, University of Minnesota

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## About this Report

On April 28, 1993, the Data Collection Symposium was held to discuss issues regarding the collection, sharing, and use of information to improve transition services and supports to youth and young adults with disabilities. The Minnesota Department of Education Interagency Office on Transition Services and the State Transition Interagency Committee (STIC) sponsored the symposium to draw upon the expertise of a diverse group of individuals in Minnesota who were interested in improving information collection and management efforts. Symposium participants included representatives from state agencies, advocates, family members, and Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC) members. Discussions were focused on:

- the types of information that CTICs, state agencies, and individual transition planning teams need;
- ways to use information that is currently collected;
- ways that information can be efficiently shared across state agencies and organizations;
- ways to encourage and institute systematic follow-along and follow-up of youth with disabilities; and
- methods to effectively manage different sources of information.

The themes presented in this publication emerged from the thoughtful contributions of the symposium participants.

The purpose of this report is to synthesize the major themes expressed at the Symposium and describe strategies for collecting, managing, and sharing information at the state and community levels. In Section I, the context in which transition is being addressed in Minnesota is discussed and the rationale for using information to improve services and supports is presented. In Section II, the types of information that state agencies, CTICs, and individual transition planning teams need are described and classified into four broad categories. In Section III recommendations for inter-agency information management and sharing efforts are provided and several examples of exemplary information sharing practices in Minnesota are described. The remaining sections offer additional information on the Data Collection Symposium and Community Transition Interagency Committees in Minnesota. Also, a brief listing of additional resources is provided.

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## Section I: An Information-Based Approach to Supporting Youth in Transition in Minnesota

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s Minnesota has been one of the most proactive states in the country in addressing the school-to-adult life transition needs of youth with disabilities. Minnesota was among the first states in the nation to establish a state level interagency committee on transition, enact legislation requiring that transition goals and objectives be included on student Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), and pass legislation establishing Community Transition Interagency Committees (CTICs) to address transition issues at the local level. These and other progressive actions have contributed to numerous statewide and local initiatives that have received national recognition for their innovative approaches.

Despite Minnesota's excellent efforts, findings from recent school-to-adult life follow-up studies conducted in Minnesota (e.g. Johnson, Thompson, & Lin, 1992; Bruininks, Thurlow, Lewis, & Larson, 1988; Thurlow, Bruininks, & Lange, 1989; Thurlow, Bruininks, Wolman, & Steffens, 1989) reveal that many youth with disabilities continue to experience difficulties in achieving desired employment and community living goals following their departure from high school. It is evident that the development and provision of transition services and supports in Minnesota is far from being completed and that professionals and family members must continue to work together to improve opportunities for young adults with disabilities.

### Using Information to Facilitate Interagency Collaboration

Developing responsive systems of services and supports to assist youth with disabilities during the transition period requires collaborative, interagency approaches that involve young people with disabilities, parents, and professionals at the state and community levels. This has been an important premise underlying Minnesota's current efforts to improve school and postschool transition services. A major interagency goal at the state level is to coordinate the activities of state agencies so that service delivery can proceed in a comprehensive and cost effective manner. At the community level, the primary challenge is to delineate the roles and responsibilities of schools, agencies, and community service organizations and develop effective interagency strategies to address the needs of youth. Community level collaboration also involves forming supportive teams (i.e.

individual transition planning teams) that focus on the unique abilities, needs, and interests of each youth.

Achievement of essential interagency goals at the state and community levels requires that comprehensive information be systematically gathered and shared among interagency participants. Informed decisions regarding program improvement and policy implementation can be made only when accurate information is available concerning: 1.) the characteristics of youth with disabilities and their needs for school and postschool services; 2.) the experiences and status of youth throughout their school and postschool years; 3.) the missions and services of local organizations and agencies; and 4.) the opinions and viewpoints of those who have received services. The next section will discuss how these four types of information can facilitate collaborative efforts and present ways in which these sources can be collected and examined by state and community level decision makers.

## **Section II: Four Types of Information Needed to Improve Transition Services and Supports in Minnesota**

### **Type 1: Information on Individual Characteristics, Needs, and Future Adult Goals**

Information concerning the needs, aspirations, and characteristics of youth with disabilities is essential for individual transition planning teams. While regulations concerning data privacy and confidentiality may pose barriers to sharing some types of information across organizations, transition planning team members should be persistent in efforts to assure that all members have an adequate knowledge base regarding the youth with whom they work. Collaborative approaches to individualized transition planning cannot be successful unless all team members have accurate and sufficient information.

Information on consumer characteristics and needs should also be collected and used on an aggregate basis by Community Transition Interagency Committees (CTICs) and state agencies to address broader transition issues. Moreover, school and postschool services must be regularly assessed in terms of their capacity to meet the needs and interests that are explicitly expressed by youth with disabilities and families.

Aggregate information can be obtained in several ways, but the most useful method is by an annual assessment of community needs. Information from a community needs assessment can assist decision makers in determining how resources should be allocated and how service options should be organized. Comparing actual services delivered with the needs and preferences of consumers can also serve to identify new programs, services, and supports that need development.

It is critical that the needs and interests of youth be evaluated prior to their departure from high school so that agencies and organizations have sufficient time to assure that adequate postschool services and supports are in place. Systematic and routine evaluation of student needs will do much to prevent situations where youth experience long waiting lists for services upon school departure or situations where youth "fall through the cracks" because no adult agency is structured to meet a particular need. For example, an adult service organization that has been aware for several years that approximately twenty-five youth will need long-term supported employment services at the conclusion of the school year will be in a much better position to address this need than if such information was received one month before the students' graduation date.

### **Type 2: School and Postschool Information**

Effective planning and management of transition programs and services must be based on ongoing and systematic evaluations of both the **postschool** outcomes of former students and accurate and complete **in-school** follow-along information on school characteristics and student performance. Such information can be usefully integrated and serve as a basis for planning and improving transition policies, programs, and interagency practices. Without adequate data collection and the sharing of information on the school and postschool status and experiences of youth, the evolution and ultimate improvement of transition policies, programs, and services will continue to rely solely on the best intentions and subjective judgements of those who are in positions to make decisions.

Much of the information currently collected by schools and public agencies has been gathered for accounting and compliance reporting rather than for program evaluation and improvement. Because compliance data (e.g. child counts, documentation of services delivered, etc.) reflect processes rather than outcomes, the data are of limited value to those who are primarily interested in the efficacy of services and practices.

Postschool outcome data pertain to the status of youth in a variety of community adjustment situations such as their living arrangements, employment status, social relationships, citizenship, and recreational/leisure pursuits. This information is typically collected by surveying former secondary students one to five years after they have left high school. While postschool outcome data provide useful general indicators of the effectiveness of special education and transition programs, outcome information alone has limited value in terms of improving transition services and supports. In the absence of information regarding factors that may have influenced outcomes (e.g. the characteristics of the young people, their experiences prior to leaving school, the characteristics of the school program, etc.), there is little basis to guide system improvement efforts.

School data must be collected in conjunction with postschool outcome data to assess the overall efficacy of transition policies and practices. School data pertain to factors that are associated with the school program and transition experiences that are presumed to influence the postschool outcomes of youth with disabilities. Informa-

tion on school characteristics and experiences as well as transition services and supports is essential. Prospective (i.e. follow-along) and/or retrospective data collection efforts are needed to accurately collect information on the school and postschool status and experiences of youth. Prospective (i.e. follow-along) data collection efforts are longitudinal in that they involve collecting school data at one point in time and postschool outcome data at another point in time. Retrospective data collection efforts involve collecting school data through the examination of school or other records at the same time that postschool outcome data are collected. Determining the impact that school experiences have on postschool adjustment will never be understood unless school and postschool information are routinely and systematically gathered.

Interpreting information on the school and postschool experiences and status of youth with disabilities is a relative process. In order to draw conclusions from information collected on youth with disabilities, similar information must be available on youth from the general population. For example, information indicating that 25% of youth with disabilities have not held jobs or attended postsecondary educational programs since departing high school is much more meaningful when the percentage of former students in the general population who have not held jobs or attended postsecondary educational programs is known.

In comparing groups of youth with and without disabilities it is important to consider the demographic factors that may influence discrepancies among the two groups. DeStefano and Wagner (1992) cite data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) which indicate that in comparison to the general population of youth, young people with disabilities are more likely to: be male (69% to 51%); be African American (24% to 12%); reside in urban areas (30% to 22%); be members of families where there is a single parent (37% to 26%); and live in families where the annual household income is less than \$25,000.00 (30% to 22%) and the head of the household did not graduate from high school (41% to 22%). Demographic factors known to be associated with postschool educational attainment and employment adjustment must be considered when attempting to understand the challenges that face youth with disabilities and when assessing the effectiveness of different approaches.

It may be unwise to expect educational or other intervention efforts to result in equivalent young adult outcomes for youth with and without disabilities. However, understanding the differences in the characteristics, school experiences, and postschool outcomes of these groups is essential to identifying areas where youth with disabilities require special supports and services. For example, if a far greater percentage of youth without

disabilities were able to articulate future plans at the time of their graduation in comparison to youth with disabilities, that might be an indication that youth with disabilities would benefit from more extensive counseling and career planning to assist them in identifying postschool goals. In addition, monitoring the extent to which the "gap" between the young adult outcomes of youth with and without disabilities either widens or diminishes in subsequent years may provide a useful indicator of the efficacy of transition policies and practices.

It is also important to compare school and postschool data on youth with disabilities before and after new practices are introduced. For example, if a CTIC had initiated an effort to increase the participation of youth with disabilities in postsecondary education and training programs, it would be critical to assess the levels of involvement of youth with disabilities in postsecondary programs before and after the approach was instituted. Such data are needed to assure that approaches to transition remain in a continual state of growth and improvement.

Case studies provide an additional means by which to obtain relevant information concerning the school and postschool experiences of youth with disabilities. Whereas the goal of data collection efforts on groups of youth with disabilities is to obtain information that is representative of a certain population or sample of individuals, the goal of the case study is to obtain a rich, holistic description of the experiences of one or a few individuals. In contrast to quantifiable, straightforward questions and responses that characterize survey data collection procedures (e.g. How many hours do you work each week?), the case study is less structured and more personalized, providing a qualitative understanding of an individual's experiences. In its best format, the case study requires that an observer maintain periodic contacts with an individual over an extended period of time. The benefit of case study information lies in the potential to obtain a more detailed and personal understanding of the transition experiences of youth with disabilities. Because of the manner by which case study findings can complement aggregate data, the collection of both types of information is especially useful for the purposes of program evaluation and improvement.

### **Type 3: Information on Community Resources and Characteristics**

Youth, family members, professionals, and other members of transition planning teams must be aware of the resources available in their communities in order to effectively develop transition goals and plans for individual students. It is imperative that each CTIC develop a resource directory that provides a description of the

services and supports offered by local organizations to professionals, youth, and family members who are involved in transition planning. Additionally, local interagency agreements are difficult to develop when the missions and roles of different organizations are not clearly understood. Having accurate information available on community resources enables CTICs to identify "gaps" in the service system and provides a foundation on which to construct a local interagency agreement. An information-based approach to delineating the roles and responsibilities of schools, agencies, and adult service organizations in a local interagency agreement is central to efforts to reduce the duplication of services and improve inter-agency efforts.

While it is essential that CTICs use information to coordinate services that are specifically targeted to individuals with disabilities, the importance of assimilating information on services that the general public uses should not be overlooked. Personnel from organizations that deliver "generic" services should be identified who can be contacted regarding the support needs of individuals with disabilities. Individual transition planning teams must be aware of the array of health, transportation, vocational, residential, recreational, and educational services that are available to the general population. A local resource directory should describe the services, eligibility requirements, costs, and other pertinent information on all "generic" community programs and services as well as services and supports that are targeted to disability populations.

Information pertaining to community characteristics is an important, albeit often overlooked, source of information for CTICs. For example, local occupational and labor market data in conjunction with information obtained through consultation with community business people can be of considerable value in developing strategies to support youth with disabilities in seeking and maintaining employment. Such information is useful for designing programs that teach youth with disabilities marketable job skills. Community information should also be compiled on rental costs, housing alternatives, recreational and social opportunities, postsecondary educational options, and other areas of interest to individual transition planning teams.

#### **Type 4: Information from Youth and Family Members**

The opinions of youth and family members must be collected to evaluate the effectiveness of services and supports. This information is distinct from traditional follow-along and follow-up data in that the subjective, personal opinions of consumers are solicited as opposed

to information on specific outcomes and experiences.

Satisfaction data refer to the opinions of youth and family members regarding the value of different programs and systems in which they participated. It is important to know the extent to which consumers are satisfied in matters such as the support they received when starting a job, their educational preparation across a variety of content areas, and their interactions with different state agencies. Without this information the ability to evaluate and improve the service system is limited.

It is important to not only seek the overall assessments of consumers regarding the services they received, but to solicit their suggestions as well. Individuals with disabilities and their family members are in unique positions to provide novel, alternative perspectives that are essential to the design of innovative service options.

#### **Summary**

There are four types of information that state level planners, CTIC members, and individual transition planning teams need to improve transition services and supports for youth with disabilities: a.) information on the characteristics, needs, and future goals of youth; b.) information on the experiences and status of youth while they are attending school and after they have departed school; c.) information on community characteristics and resources; and d.) information from youth and families regarding their opinions of existing services and their ideas for service improvement. Information regarding the needs and characteristics of youth with disabilities provides a basis for individualized transition planning and service provision. School and postschool outcome information and information regarding community characteristics are essential to establishing service priorities and monitoring progress. Community resource information is necessary to inform professionals and family members of service options and develop local interagency agreements. Information from consumers is critical to assuring that transition programs and practices remain relevant to the interests and needs of those for whom services are targeted.

The four types of information that were discussed in this section can greatly assist interagency efforts to close the gap between "what is" and "what ought to be" for youth with disabilities. The next section provides recommendations for collecting and sharing information in Minnesota. In addition, several examples of creative information-based transition efforts currently underway in Minnesota are described.

## Section III: Recommendations for Collecting and Sharing Information in Minnesota

### Recommendation #1: Regularly Conduct Local Needs Assessments

Community Transition Interagency Committees (CTICs) are in a unique position to conduct community level needs assessments on a periodic basis. At the minimum, a local needs assessment should identify: the support needs expressed by youth with disabilities and their family members; the number of graduates with disabilities who are going to be leaving high school within the upcoming five years; the number of individuals with disabilities who are receiving services from community agencies and the capacities of these organizations to support additional individuals; and the extent to which individuals are on waiting lists for different services. The Benton/Stearns CTIC has recently completed a thorough community needs assessment that can serve as a model for other CTICs in the state.

A report should be developed and shared among local organizations and agencies when a community needs assessment is completed. This report should summarize the findings and provide recommendations for future action. State level planners should use local needs assessment reports from throughout the state to guide their interagency planning efforts.

It is the responsibility of state agencies in Minnesota to take the lead in supporting CTICs to conduct local needs assessments, especially in the areas of technical assistance and funding.

### Recommendation #2: Develop Methods for Sharing Information Across Agencies

Efficiently sharing information among interagency team members is critical when individual transition planning teams are developing plans with youth and their families. To expedite information sharing efforts, a standard release of information form should be developed that meets the criteria of all organizations to release confidential information on individuals with disabilities. Community and state agencies would also benefit from a concerted interagency effort to identify a common language that uniformly describes student characteristics and needs.

Efforts to share information across agencies is most successful when there is a collective commitment to regularly meet together and communicate. Collaboration

requires that individuals from different agencies have sufficient time to participate in interagency activities. State agencies must continue to place a high priority on interagency collaboration and assure that their staff have manageable workloads so that information sharing and other collaborative efforts can occur.

Independent school district #196 (Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan) in collaboration with Dakota County has recently developed a model for an electronic interagency information sharing system that promotes interagency communication and planning. This innovative system enables the efficient transfer of information on youth with disabilities from the school district to community adult service organizations and state agencies. In addition to sharing specific information on individuals, aggregate data can be extracted and used for local and state planning purposes.

### Recommendation #3: Compile and Review Data on Student Transition IEP Objectives

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is the primary transition planning document for youth with disabilities who are in school. State law requires that five transition areas (recreation and leisure, postsecondary education and training, jobs and job training, community participation, home living) be addressed for every student with a disability who is fourteen years old or enrolled in the ninth grade (MS 120.17 Subd. 3a). Monitoring the content of IEPs can assist educators and interagency team members in evaluating and improving educational services and transition planning efforts.

The most basic information to gather from a review of IEPs is an indication of the degree to which transition planning is occurring across the five transition areas and the extent to which different individuals (e.g. students, parents, professionals from community service organizations, etc.) are participating in the process. In addition, IEP goals and objectives should be reviewed to identify patterns of student needs for services.

Potentially the most valuable use of information from IEPs is the identification of relationships between school programs and postschool outcomes. For example, identifying relationships between vocational programs and employment status, academic training and postsecondary educational achievement, and the extent to which adult goals that were identified and addressed in

the transition planning process are attained would be extremely valuable information for educators and other interagency team members. School programs will become increasingly responsive to the needs of youth with disabilities as relationships between what is taught in school and the challenges that youth with disabilities face in their adult lives are better understood.

#### **Recommendation #4: Implement Postschool Follow-up Studies at the Local Level**

Because postschool outcome information is the most basic source of information for purposes of program evaluation and improvement, there is widespread agreement that local interagency teams should conduct postschool follow-up investigations on a periodic basis. In 1992 the Minnesota legislature passed legislation requiring CTICs to collect postschool outcome information on youth with disabilities annually (M.S. 120.17 subd. 16). Interagency teams that have not yet initiated local follow-up investigations should begin this process as soon as possible.

Fortunately, a system that enables local school districts and/or interagency teams to collect routine outcome information is available. The Minnesota Postschool Follow-up System (Johnson & Sinclair, 1990) provides schools and local communities with a tool to collect information on the postschool status and experiences of youth with disabilities. It includes the following components: a.) a procedures manual that describes a seven step process on how to collect and report follow-up information; b.) data collection forms to conduct the follow-up; and c.) software that enables the user to compile and print data in an aggregate format. The Minnesota Postschool Follow-up System has been used successfully in Minnesota as well as several other states.

Large scale postschool follow-up investigations also provide useful information. The Minnesota Department of Education-Vocational Education annually collects and reports outcome data on former Minnesota public school students. Additionally, in the summer of 1993 eleven communities in Minnesota collected detailed postschool outcome information as part of the Minnesota Postschool Follow-up Study. The findings from this investigation will provide a broad measure of the outcomes of youth with disabilities across the state.

#### **Recommendation #5: Use Information That is Already Collected by State Agencies**

Several participants in the "Symposium on Data Collection" completed surveys (see Appendix A) regarding their agency's data collection and dissemination

efforts. It is evident that there is an abundance of information currently being compiled that interagency teams would find useful. The Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Jobs and Training have initiated a project to explore ways that information can be matched and shared more effectively across state agencies.

It is essential that data currently collected at the state and local level be disseminated to audiences who need the information to make informed program and service delivery decisions. While the privacy of the individuals on whom data are collected must be respected, it is apparent that much of the data currently collected by state agencies could be made available to other agencies and local CTICs on an aggregate basis.

#### **Recommendation #6: Establish Efficient Strategies to Manage Information**

Information can easily become overwhelming unless there are specific plans in place regarding how different sources of information will be analyzed, used, and disseminated to target audiences. It is essential that those involved in information collection and sharing efforts have a strategy for storing and integrating information prior to embarking upon large scale data collection efforts. State level planners should assure that technical assistance is available to local interagency teams to address issues of information management.

An innovative approach to managing information is being developed at the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota. The Transition Information and Planning System (TIPS) is a computer based management and planning system designed to organize information that facilitates and improves transition planning at the individual and community levels. The system stores several types of information including: 1.) "follow-along" information such as an individual's long term goals and progress toward these goals as recorded on the IEP; 2.) information regarding community resources such as postschool services; and 3.) postschool outcome information.

There are many ways that information from TIPS can be used to facilitate collaboration among transition planners. For example, TIPS can produce a pre-IEP transition planning interagency report that includes a review of an individual's current transition goals and activities as well as a summary of previous transition planning meetings. This report can encourage the participation of all individuals involved in the transition planning process and promote efficient use of time at transition planning meetings. Another example is the capacity of TIPS to generate a report that identifies the

postschool needs of future graduates. This information enables adult service providers to prepare for and respond to the needs of future consumers. TIPS also allows for the storage and compilation of postschool outcome data. Several other specific applications of TIPS have been identified (see Johnson et al., 1992).

### **Recommendation #7: Develop Resource Directories at the Local Level**

In order to develop a comprehensive system of transition services and supports there must be widespread awareness of the services targeted to individuals with disabilities as well as services available to the general public that youth with disabilities can access. Each CTIC in Minnesota should consider developing a resource directory that identifies local organizations and describes the types of services that are offered. Developing a local resource directory is a straightforward process that includes: 1.) networking among interagency representatives to identify relevant organizations; 2.) creating a survey form that includes key information of interest to professionals, youth, and families; 3.) surveying the various organizations; and 4.) compiling the survey information in a logical format. Numerous resource directories have been produced throughout Minnesota by CTICs as a means for sharing information about services. The Northwest Regional CTIC, the Paul Bunyan CTIC, and the International Falls CTIC have especially good examples.

A resource directory enables youth and families to explore the range of services and supports that are available in a community. Without this information, many youth and families are dependent upon the knowledge and opinions of a few professionals in determining what services may be appropriate. A resource directory is an invaluable tool for CTICs that are in the process of developing local interagency agreements. Once the types of services and supports provided by different organizations are known, "gaps" in the service system can be recognized and commitments can be made to fulfill different service roles and responsibilities.

### **Recommendation #8: Systematically Collect Consumer Information to Improve Services**

There is no substitute for the perspectives of youth and families when assessing the extent to which current services are meeting the needs of youth with disabilities. Without consumer feedback, professionals run the risk of offering services and programs that are totally misguided. State agencies and CTICs should regularly survey their consumers and former consumers regarding service

satisfaction. Additionally, the input of youth and family members should be sought regarding new approaches or changes in the service system.

When collecting satisfaction data, it is important to not only assess the general level of consumer satisfaction but to gather information on "why" consumers feel positive or negative about their experiences with different services and organizations. Information from consumers is most useful for the purpose of formative evaluation (i.e. evaluation to improve programs). An over-emphasis on summative evaluation (i.e. evaluation to judge the overall value of programs) can make gathering satisfaction data a threatening experience for organizations and may offer little to enhance program quality.

The need to formally collect information from consumers should not overshadow the importance of including youth and families in interagency teams and in other decision making capacities. It is vital that CTICs and state agencies consistently create avenues for youth and family members to offer suggestions and provide feedback.

Several efforts to obtain satisfaction measures of youth and family members have been initiated in Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Education-Vocational Education has collected consumer satisfaction data for many years. Numerous CTICs have held community forums where consumers and family members are encouraged to express opinions and offer suggestions regarding the service delivery system. The South Hennepin CTIC has completed an innovative project where focus group sessions with former students were videotaped. These sessions centered on the youth's assessments of the relative benefits of various school and postschool services and solicited their opinions regarding ways to improve transition services and supports. CTIC members viewed the videotapes and used the information to develop local interagency goals and improve transition services.

### **Recommendation #9: Encourage Networking Among CTICs and Other Interagency Committees**

To assure that what are now known to be "best practices" become common practices throughout the state, CTICs are encouraged to actively pursue opportunities to network with other CTICs and interagency committees in Minnesota. It is apparent that many innovative approaches to collecting and using information in Minnesota have been introduced. As practical solutions emerge, all who are concerned with the lives of youth with disabilities must strive to share and replicate successful approaches.

State level planners should continue to sponsor state and regional conferences and inservice workshops to provide opportunities for individuals to further develop their skills and establish working relationships with others who are addressing similar challenges. It is essential that CTICs access the technical assistance resources that are already in place in Minnesota. For example, through "Project Invest" a resource bank of parents and professionals are available to assist CTICs and other groups involved in the transition of youth with disabilities from school to adult life. The nine Regional Interagency Systems Change (RISC) projects across Minnesota also provide a good resource for CTICs to obtain current information on creative approaches to interagency collaboration.

## Summary

Nine recommendations for using information to improve transition services and supports in Minnesota were presented to provide a focus for future efforts and to encourage the replication of successful approaches. Exciting examples of how different types of information have been used to improve policies and programs and guide decision making are evident throughout the state. As Minnesotans become increasingly skilled at collecting, managing, and sharing different types of information, more comprehensive, better coordinated services and supports will emerge to enhance opportunities for youth with disabilities.

## Section IV: References

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## Section V: Resources

### Books

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Wehman, P. (1992). *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

### Monographs

Hasazi, S. B., DeStefano, L., Cravedi-Cheng, & Hock. (1992). *Using satisfaction and student outcome information for program improvement*. Burlington, VT: Department of Special Education, University of Vermont.

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Wagner, M., DiAmico, R., Marder, C., Newman, L., & Blackorby, J. (1992). *What happens next? Trends in postschool outcomes of youth with disabilities: The second comprehensive report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

### Journal Articles

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Minnesota Department of Administration, The Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. (1993). *Minnesotans speak out!* St. Paul: author.

Minnesota Department of Education. (in press). *Making the transition team work*. St. Paul: author.

Wallace, T., Thompson, S., & Corbey, S. (1993). *Funding services for youth with disabilities in transition*. St. Paul: Minnesota Transition Systems Improvement Initiative.

### Further Information

For further information on TIPS (Transition Information and Planning System) contact Pam Hunt, Institute on Community Integration, 6 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Dr. SE, Minneapolis, MN, 55455, (612) 625-3863.

For further information on the Minnesota Postschool Follow-up Study contact Jim Thompson, Institute on Community Integration, 5 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Dr. SE, Minneapolis, MN, 55455, (612) 624-7858.

For further information on the Minnesota High School Follow-up contact Delores Pospesel, 372 Capitol Square Building, St. Paul, MN, 55101, (612) 296-0662.

For further information on the Dakota County Information Sharing System contact Sam Roberts, Dakota County Community Service Administration, 33 E. Wontworth Ave., W. St. Paul, MN, 55118, (612) 450-2889 or Tracy Page, Dakota County Data Processing, 1590 W. Highway 55, Hastings, MN, 55033, (612) 438-4290.

## Section VI: Appendices

### Appendix A — Information Collected by Minnesota Agencies

#### Minnesota Department of Jobs and Training Community Based Services

- Address  
390 No. Robert St., St. Paul, MN 55101
- Agency program specialist  
Larry Eisenstadt Phone: 296-6073
- Agency data specialist  
Chrys Zaglifa Phone: 296-7916
- What types of data do you currently collect?  
Employment data at 13 weeks following termination from work.
- On whom do you collect data?  
Adult JTPA program trainees.
- Who collects it?  
Local program operators via phone survey.
- How do you report it?  
In reports to the U.S. Dept. of Labor
- How often do you compile a report?  
1 time a year
- To whom do you disseminate this information?  
U.S. Dept. of Labor; local program operators.
- What costs are associated with your data collection procedures?  
\$12-15/survey
- What type of system (hard and soft) do you utilize for your data collection methods?  
Dataflex software, IBM hardware.

#### Minnesota Department of Education Vocational Programs/Perkins Basic Grant

- Address  
550 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55101
- Agency program specialist  
Lezlie Ingvalson Phone: 296-6127
- Agency data specialist  
Delores Pospesel Phone: 296-0662
- What types of data do you currently collect?  
Number of special population students in vocational programs.
- On whom do you collect data?  
Disabled, disadvantaged, LEP students in vocational programs that are a minority in regard to equity and students in correctional facilities.
- Who collects it?  
Consortium grant writers. One time a year.

### Minnesota Department of Education, Vocational Education

- Address  
8th Floor, Capitol Square Bldg., St. Paul, MN 55101
- Agency program specialist  
Lezlie Ingvalson Phone: 296-6127
- Agency data specialist  
Delores Pospesel Phone: 296-0662
- What types of data do you currently collect?  
Demographic data, student characteristics (race, gender, special populations), education plans, anticipated support needs, employment plans, type of high school programs received, student satisfaction, locally generated questions for data collection.
- On whom do you collect data?  
One year out of school, sample of all former high school students.
- Who collects it?  
Schools
- How do you report it?  
Annual report
- To whom do you disseminate this information?  
Vocational directors (secondary), technical colleges, superintendents, principals.

### Division of Rehabilitation Services

- Address  
390 No. Robert St., 1st Floor, St. Paul, MN 55101
- Agency program specialist  
Roberta Pisa Phone: 296-9138
- Agency data specialist  
Gene Kramer/Steve Scholl Phone: 296-1718
- What types of data do you currently collect?  
Demographics, educational, disability related, service data.
- On whom do you collect data?  
People with disabilities to whom DRS provides services, including students in transition.
- Who collects it?  
Primarily counselors.
- How do you report it?  
As needed for caseload management.
- How often do you compile a report?  
Some reports are monthly, others annual, others on demand.
- To whom do you disseminate this information?  
Counselors, in some cases services providers.
- What costs are associated with your data collection procedures?  
Staff and EDP
- What type of system (hard and soft) do you utilize for your data collection methods?  
Many and various/applications, service notes, EDP, IBM mainframe and PC's.

## Minnesota Department of Education — Special Education

- Address  
550 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55101
- Agency program specialist  
Bob Fischer Phone: 296-4164
- Agency data specialist  
Bob Fischer Phone: 296-4164
- What types of data do you currently collect?  
Child count, fiscal data, IEP data, federal data report.
- On whom do you collect data?  
All special education.
- Who collects it?  
Program operations team.
- How do you report it?  
3 1/2" disk for Feds; mainframe for state.
- How often do you compile a report?  
Fiscal - quarterly; IEP - annual and child count annual.
- To whom do you disseminate this information?  
State and federal government.
- What costs are associated with your data collection procedures?  
Staff and computer system.
- What type of system (hard and soft) do you utilize for your data collection methods?  
EDRS mainframe interactive.

## Minnesota State Services for the Blind

- Address  
2200 University Ave. W. #240, St. Paul, MN 55114
- Agency data specialist  
To be appointed. Phone: 642-0508
- What types of data do you currently collect?  
911 EDP forms used by program staff (counselors).  
(This information is reported to feds at the end of year.)
- On whom do you collect data?  
All active cases of clients between ages 0-90+
- Who collects it?  
Counselors and clt./staff support unit via computer.
- How do you report it?  
Counselors get copy of computer printout generated by clVstaff support unit.
- How often do you compile a report?  
Monthly
- To whom do you disseminate this information?  
Counselors, supervisors, evaluation manager, director of program staff, assistant commissioner.

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## Social Security Administration

- Address  
316 N. Robert, Room 185, St. Paul, MN 55101
- Agency program specialist  
Glenn Samuelson Phone: 290-3961
- What types of data do you currently collect?  
Financial, types of disabilities, geographic number of recipients and beneficiaries, number on PASS, number working.
- On whom do you collect data?  
Any disability, SSI or regular Social Security.
- Who collects it?  
Keyed in central computer, national database distributed out periodically to state.
- How do you report it?  
Can get by name, accessible to state.
- How often do you compile a report?  
Social Security bulletin monthly, annual statistical supplement end of year.
- To whom do you disseminate this information?  
Libraries, SS office, DHS
- What costs are associated with your data collection procedures?  
Small percentage of expenditure of administration.
- What type of system (hard and soft) do you utilize for your data collection methods?  
Mainframe hard drive, data goes in here. 75/77 people of data entry. Claris representative, key station.

## Minnesota Dept. of Human Services/Division for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

- Address  
444 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-3825
- Agency program specialist  
Jim Franczyk Phone: 296-2171
- What types of data do you currently collect?  
Client-specific information re: services, levels of functioning, service needs, diagnosis, cost of services, providers of services.
- On whom do you collect data?  
Persons with mental retardation and/or related conditions (epilepsy, autism, cerebral palsy).
- Who collects it?  
1. Medical Assistance payment system; 2. MR screenings; 3. Quality Assurance and Review (DOH).
- How do you report it?  
All possible ways: 1) client-specific; 2) provider-specific; 3) aggregate.
- How often do you compile a report?  
Ad hoc, monthly, quarterly.
- To whom do you disseminate this information?  
DD professionals at county and state human service agencies.
- What costs are associated with your data collection procedures?  
Minimal costs! Hardware, software, and consultant services.
- What type of system (hard and soft) do you utilize for your data collection methods?  
1) Downloading from Mainframe files; 2) on-line system maintenance by DD program managers.

## Minnesota Technical College System

- Address  
300 Capitol Square Bldg., St. Paul, MN 55101
- Agency program specialist  
Lloyd Petri Phone: 296-2337
- Agency data specialist  
Ron Dryer Phone: 296-9596
- What types of data do you currently collect?  
Financial (college spending), staff data (numbers of faculty), and student data. Student data includes: types of disabilities, follow up of graduates, job placement, relatedness of job placement to training, types of support services students received by hour and type, number of graduates from each program, program enrollment in credit programs, full year equivalency. Locals may collect salary data.
- On whom do you collect data?  
All students but less on hour based students that have a non credited program.
- Who collects it?  
Local technical colleges, collect locally and reports to state.
- How do you report it?  
Annual report, separate reports, collected annually.
- How often do you compile a report?  
On request as needed.
- To whom do you disseminate this information?  
Public, employers, colleges, State Board of Technical Colleges.
- What type of system (hard and soft) do you utilize for your data collection methods?  
Locals use PC, diskette sent to state, state puts on PC, financial data is on tape.

## Minnesota Department of Education

- Address  
537 Capitol Square Building, St. Paul, MN 55101
- Agency data specialist  
Carol Hokenson Phone: 296-4432
- What types of data do you currently collect?  
Birthdate, race, gender, post secondary enrollment options, special education - by disability, instructional setting, grade, % in school, gifted and talented, primary language spoke at home, name (volunteered this year, mandated next year), free and reduced lunch by school and grade, dropout data (status of withdrawal from school, withdrawal codes), attendance, membership, social security number.
- On whom do you collect data?  
K-12 grades, early childhood handicapped.
- Who collects it?  
Schools, mandated locally.
- How do you report it?  
Aggregated, two data bases, numerous reports, student and MNCRIS.
- How often do you compile a report?  
Two times per year; fall and end of school year.
- To whom do you disseminate this information?  
Used to pay state school aides, MDE users, public, school districts, agencies.
- What costs are associated with your data collection procedures?  
Local district costs.
- What type of system (hard and soft) do you utilize for your data collection methods?  
Variety of systems, stand alone, main frame, on-line to regional computer system (ESV); tape is transmitted to MDE and placed on mainframe.

## Appendix B

### Data Collection Symposium Agenda St. Paul Hotel, St. Paul, MN April 28, 1993 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

|       |       |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                              |
|-------|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:00  | I.    | <b>Convene Symposium</b><br>• Introductions                                                                                                                  | Stephanie Corbey<br>Interagency Office on Transition         |
| 9:10  | II.   | <b>Setting the Stage for Collaboration</b>                                                                                                                   | Gayle Anderson, Dept. of Ed.<br>Community Collaboration Team |
| 9:20  | III.  | <b>Purpose of Symposium</b>                                                                                                                                  | Stephanie Corbey                                             |
| 9:30  | IV.   | <b>What's Been Done So Far?</b>                                                                                                                              | Larry Eisenstadt, Jobs & Trng<br>State Transition Com. Chair |
| 9:40  | V.    | <b>What Do We Got to Go On?</b><br>• Special Studies<br>• How is data summarized?<br>• How is information shared across agencies?<br>• For what purposes?    | Stephanie Corbey                                             |
| 10:00 | VI.   | <b>How to Do It?</b><br>It take all of us....                                                                                                                | Mark Wolak, Group Facilitator<br>People Works                |
|       |       | Question One: What types of information do we need to collect at state and local level?                                                                      |                                                              |
| 10:30 |       | <b>BREAK</b>                                                                                                                                                 |                                                              |
|       |       | Question Two: How can we collect it? How often?                                                                                                              |                                                              |
|       |       | Question Three: Who should we be collecting information on?                                                                                                  |                                                              |
|       |       | Question Four: What data elements or types of outcomes do we want to track?                                                                                  |                                                              |
|       |       | Question Five: How should information be shared across agencies?                                                                                             |                                                              |
| 12:00 |       | <b>LUNCH</b>                                                                                                                                                 |                                                              |
| 1:00  | VII.  | <b>What to Do With It Once We Got It?</b><br>• How will data be used?<br>• How can CTICs be encouraged to utilize data for planning and service improvement? | MarkWolak                                                    |
| 2:15  | VIII. | <b>What Do We All Think?</b>                                                                                                                                 | MarkWolak                                                    |
| 2:45  | IX    | <b>Recommendations and Next Steps</b>                                                                                                                        | Stephanie Corbey                                             |
| 3:00  | X.    | <b>Adjourn</b>                                                                                                                                               |                                                              |

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## Appendix D — Transition Legislation in Minnesota

M.S. 120.17 Subd. 3a: Every district shall ensure that all students with disabilities are provided the special instruction and services which are appropriate to their needs. The student's needs and the special education instruction and services to be provided shall be agreed upon through the development of an individual education plan. The plan shall address the student's need to develop skills to live and work as independently as possible within the community. By grade 9 or age 14, the plan shall address the student's needs for transition from secondary services to post-secondary education and training, employment, community participation, recreation and leisure, and home living. The plan must include a statement of the needed transition services, including a statement of the inter-agency responsibilities or linkages or both before secondary services are concluded.

M.S. 120.17 Subd. 16 [Community Transition Inter-agency Committee]: A district, group of districts, or special education cooperative, in cooperation with the county or counties in which the district or cooperative is located, shall establish a community transition inter-agency committee for youth with disabilities, beginning at grade 9 or age equivalent, and their families. Members of the committee shall consist of representatives from special education; vocational and regular education; community education; post-secondary education and training institutions; adults with disabilities who have received transition services, if such adults are available; parents of youth with disabilities; local business or industry; rehabilitative services; county social services; health agencies; and additional public or private adult

service providers as appropriate. The committee shall elect a chair and shall meet regularly. The committee shall:

- (1) identify current services, programs, and funding sources provided within the community for secondary and post-secondary aged youth with disabilities and their families;
- (2) facilitate the development of multiagency teams to address present and future transition needs of individual students on their individual education plans;
- (3) develop a community plan to include mission, goals, and objectives, and an implementation plan to assure that transition needs of individuals with disabilities are met;
- (4) recommend changes or improvements in the community system of transition services;
- (5) exchange agency information such as appropriate data, effectiveness studies, special projects, exemplary programs, and creative funding of programs; and
- (6) following procedures determined by the commissioner, prepare a yearly summary assessing the progress of transition services in the community, including follow-up of individuals with disabilities who were provided transition services to determine the outcomes. The summary must be disseminated to all adult services agencies involved in the planning and to the commissioner of education by October 1 of each year.



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